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THE WASHINGTON POST - 14 December 1961

'Rescued' Men Linked to CIA

HOUSTON, Dec. 13 (UPI) — The Houston Press today said the "rescue" of two mystery men in the Gulf of Mexico off the Florida coast two days ago was not a rescue, but a foul-up that wrecked a top secret project of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The cloak of secrecy thrown around the incident by the Intelligence Service at Galveston, Tex., and the Coast Guard was a belated effort to keep the spotlight off something that was never supposed to become known, the Press said it had learned.

"The two men were not

lost," the Press reported. "They were not in trouble. They were not supposed to be picked up.

"When the freighter Cottonwood Creek stopped to pick them up, the men protested vigorously to the captain that they just wanted to be left alone, but the skipper was not convinced."

The newspaper said it learned from "an entirely authoritative source" that the Coast Guard found up the situation by notifying the captain to take the "rescued" men to the nearest port for questioning.

But by the time the freight-

er reached Galveston orders were out to hush up the whole affair, the Press said. The rescued men, who disappeared after they were taken off the freighter, were identified only as "John Stevens, a citizen of the United States," and "Reynaldo Silva Antigua, a citizen of Cuba."

The men were picked up near Dry Tortugas off Key West, Fla., in an 18-foot outboard boat that was painted black. The boat had a partially hidden ship-to-shore radio and skin-diving equipment aboard. It contained underwater flashlights and sheath knives.

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